

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2679

S E C R E T ATHENS 1391

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, GR, US

SUBJ: HELLENIC AIR FORCE MODERNIZATION NEEDS

DEPT PLS PASS TO SEC OF DEFENSE

REF: ATHENS 1390

1. I HAVE HAD A NUMBER OF CONVERSATIONS WITH LT.GEN PAPANICOLAOU AND OTHER GREEK MILITARY LEADERS ABOUT PRESSING NEEDS OF HAF. PAPANICALAOU IS A DEDICATED AND TOTALLY SINCERE AIR FORCE CHIEF, ESSENTIALLY APOLITICAL AND ABSOLUTELY COMMITTED TO UPGRADING HAF IN SHORTEST POSSIBLE TIME. ALL CONCERNED AGREE THAT F-84'S AND T-33'S ARE VIRTUALLY USELESS AND ARE MAI REASON FOR DETERIORATION OF HAF. WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO FACILITATE (SEE REFTEL) RAPID DECISION BY HAF ON PURCHASE OF NEW CONSTRUCTION REPLACE-
MENT AIRCRAFT BOTH TO MEET HAF'S NEEDS AND TO CREATE ATMOSPHERE WITHIN WHICH UNRESOLVED ISSUES IN SOUDA AB AND HOMEPORTING NEGOTIATIONS MIGHT BE DECIDED IN OUR FAVOR AND SOON.

2. THE PRESENT STATE OF DECREPITUDE OF F-84'S AND T-33'S WOULD CONTINUE TO POSE SERIOUS SAFETY AND MORALE PROBLEMS, AND CONSEQUENTLY LIMIT COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS OF HAF, EVEN IF MODERN AIRCRAFT WERE ORDERED VERY SOON. I UNDERSTAND THAT APPROXIMATELY TWO YEARS LEAD TIME REQUIRED FOR DELIVERY OF MOST NEW PRODUCTION AIRCRAFT. USG EFFORT TO HELP GOG

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SOLVE ITS AIRCRAFT PROBLEMS SHOULD INCLUDE SOMETHING

TO BRIDGE GAP BETWEEN PRESENT STATE OF DECREPITUDE AND
DELIVERY OF NEW AIRCRAFT. LOAN OR LEASE OF AIRCRAFTAN WHICH
WAS DONE FOR KOREA, WOULD BE VERY USEFUL STEP, PARTICULARLY
IF SUCH LOANED AIRCRAFT WERE SAME TYPES ORDERED OR THOSE
ALREADY IN HAF INVENTORY (E.G. F-4'S, A-7'S, T-2D'S, ETC.).
I URGE THAT EVERY CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO THIS PROPOSAL
SO THAT LOAN OR LEASE MAY BE EFFECTED IN CONJUNCTION
WITH GOG COMMITMENT TO PURCHASE NEW AIRCRAFT.
TASCA

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SEC OF DEFENSE

SECRET

NNN

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